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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PRAGUE 000788

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SUBJECT: CODEL TAUSCHER'S DECEMBER 18 MEETINGS IN PRAGUE

Classified By: DCM Mary Thompson-Jones, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Summary: During a December 18 trip to Prague, Representatives Ellen Tauscher (D-CA) and Doug Lamborn (R-CO) met with Czech FM Schwarzenberg, DFM Pojar and DPM Vondra. Representative Tauscher stressed linking a possible radar site in the Czech Republic to short and medium range missile defense (MD), and the importance of further testing of long range interceptors. Tauscher, Lamborn and their Czech interlocutors all agreed on the need to make a public case about the link between radar and short and medium range MD. At each meeting, Tauscher said she appreciated the political capital the Czechs had invested in MD. Schwarzenberg and Pojar stressed the importance of a clear statement of support for MD from the incoming Obama administration. Vondra briefed the representatives on the prospects for ratification of MD legislation. Representatives Tauscher and Lamborn briefed the Czechs about their just-completed meetings in Russia and Poland. End Summary.

FM Schwarzenberg

¶2. (SBU) Representative Tauscher briefed FM Schwarzenberg on the CODEL's contacts in Russia. The main agenda items were non-proliferation, Iran, and Georgia. Tauscher told the FM the CODEL had made clear to the Russians their displeasure with Russian saber rattling. The CODEL offered to engage with Russian legislators on MD; the Russians neither accepted nor declined. Representative Tauscher said the CODEL would also like to engage with Czech parliamentarians.

¶3. (C) FM Schwarzenberg said that Czechs are waiting for a clear statement of support for MD from the incoming administration. The current mixed signals on MD are not good. Until then, it would be wiser to wait on parliamentary engagement. Passions are high in the Czech parliament now and the opposition is currently disinclined to move. The government is waiting for the proper moment to move forward with MD legislation in the lower house. He predicted that ultimately the legislation would be approved.

¶4. (SBU) Representative Tauscher explained the range of views in Congress about MD. Tauscher said Congress had not significantly cut MD funding, but had shifted funds to emphasize short and medium range MD. Representative Tauscher said Congress wanted to see more testing of long range MD, so that it would be a credible deterrent to potential adversaries and a wise expenditure for American taxpayers.

¶5. (SBU) MFA Security Policy Department Director Veronika Kuchynova-Smigolova noted that a radar site in the Czech Republic could form part of a short or medium range MD system; Representatives Tauscher and Lamborn agreed. Tauscher explained that the radar can fit into a suite of MD systems. However, the long-range system has had testing difficulties and Congress is determined to keep testing the system until it is proved a credible deterrent.

¶6. (SBU) Representative Lamborn noted that Russia had been more focused on the interceptors than the radar, expressing concern that the number of interceptors in Europe would gradually increase. The FM said this is because Russia still considers Central Europe & their territory⁸; changing that mentality would take a generation, he predicted.

¶7. (SBU) Schwarzenberg expressed hope that President-elect Obama would meet with the EU 27 in Prague in April; the CODEL undertook to convey the message to the transition team.

DFM Pojar

¶8. (SBU) Representative Tauscher also explained to DFM Tomas Pojar Congressional emphasis on deploying short and medium range MD, and on more testing of long range MD. Tauscher stressed that NATO allies needed to be convinced that there is a ballistic missile threat to Europe.

¶9. (SBU) Representative Tauscher said the NATO MD system looks good on paper, but Allies had not come forth with funding. Tauscher said Allies need to work together on short and medium range MD, either through NATO or, if that was not possible, bilaterally. She urged cooperation in educating and convincing the European public about the ballistic missile threat. A short or medium range MD system would need radar as well, she noted. Tauscher said the U.S. is aware of the political capital the Czech government had expended on MD, and she said the U.S. would be helpful.

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¶10. (C) Representative Lamborn noted that host country signing and ratification of MD agreements are conditions for further funding. DFM Pojar said the ratification effort is currently difficult. A clear statement of support for MD from the incoming administration would be important to ratification. If the radar site is to be part of a short or medium range MD system, then the Czech public would need to be shown the value of the Czech radar site for that system. This had been discussed when the radar site was first proposed, but had not been emphasized.

¶11. (SBU) DFM Pojar asked about the CODEL's Russia trip. Representative Tauscher noted the difficulty in understanding which Russian statements were serious and which were just intended for domestic consumption. Tauscher told Pojar she had pushed back on the Russian threat to station missiles in Kaliningrad and had urged Russia to help on Iran. However, the Russians do not believe Iran's nuclear program is a threat, and do not support economic sanctions. Russians view MD as a strategic threat because of reductions in their ground forces and strategic over-reliance on nuclear weapons. Tauscher noted that the U.S. would ask Russia to join short and medium range MD systems.

¶12. (C) Pojar said the Czech government is prepared to talk to the Russians as well. The only condition is that discussions of possible Russian presence at a Czech radar site must be bilateral. Pojar said the sooner the new administration talks to Russia, the better, but he could not imagine Russia would be helpful on Iran.

¶13. (SBU) Pojar asked the CODEL whether Polish interlocutors had raised the NATO aspect of MD. They had, Tauscher replied, and agree MD needs to be & NATO-ized.⁸ However, she stressed again that, although the Poles and NATO SecGen understand the short and medium range ballistic missile threat, too many Allies do not. She asked for Czech help to make the public aware of the threat.

¶14. (SBU) Tauscher expressed appreciation for Czech contributions in Afghanistan, and hoped that the Czech parliament would approve the Afghanistan troop deployment

resolution for 2009. The DFM predicted the Czechs would stay in Afghanistan. He applauded the increase in U.S. troops in Logar province, where the Czechs have a PRT; bad security had been hindering reconstruction, he said.

¶15. (SBU) Tauscher also requested Czech help in Pakistan, which is currently very fragile economically. Pojar said both the EU and the Czech government would be helpful.

DPM Vondra

¶16. (SBU) In a meeting with DPM Vondra, Representative Tauscher expressed appreciation for the Czech commitment to missile defense and the political capital the Czech government has invested into this effort. Representative Lamborn thanked the Czech government for its troops deployed to Afghanistan. DPM Vondra briefed delegation members on the ratification status of the two MD agreements, the Ballistic Missile Defense Agreement and the SOFA. Vondra, who is also a senator, noted with satisfaction that the Czech Senate approved the two agreements on November 27 with a constitutional, or three-fifths, majority. With regard to the Lower Chamber, Vondra stated that ratification would be more complicated but that he was confident the agreements would be approved. According to Vondra, the government is currently looking for the most opportune moment for restarting the first reading of the two MD agreements, which has been suspended since October 29.

¶17. (SBU) Representative Tauscher suggested that public outreach remained important and that it was important to make the case to the parliament and the people about the short-range and mid-range missile threat, which is real and needs to be addressed now. In this regard, Representative Tauscher suggested that the political decision to link the MD radar proposed for the Czech Republic and the interceptors proposed for Poland may need to be revisited. According to Tauscher, she has stressed in the past that the radar is important to the network of systems, for short-range and medium-range MD system,8 to which the long-range system would eventually be bolted on. With regard to the long-range interceptors, Representative Tauscher thought that another 18-24 months would be needed for further testing.

¶18. (SBU) DPM Vondra and Tauscher also exchanged views on Russia, with Representative Tauscher briefing Vondra on her meetings in Moscow. She stressed that continued discussion

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and, where possible, cooperation with Russia was important. Vondra cautioned that Russia will continue to view the MD sites proposed for the Czech Republic and Poland through the geopolitical prism and would therefore continue to object to both elements, even though the radar may be viewed slightly differently. He noted that his government had sought clarification from the French on President Sarkozy's statements regarding MD and was satisfied that the French continue to support the NATO position. With regard to Medvedev, Vondra added that the Russian president was simply trying to test the incoming Obama administration. In conclusion, Representative Tauscher committed to brief President-elect Obama's transition team on her meetings in the Czech Republic and to recommend that President Obama accept the Czech Republic's invitation to visit in early April for an informal U.S.-EU summit.

¶19. (U) CODEL Tauscher did not have an opportunity to clear this message before departing post.
Thompson-Jones